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BRIGADIER GENERAL

BENJAMIN TUPPER,

—OF THE—

REVOLUTIONARY ARMY,

—AND OF—

THE OHIO COMPANY.

[The following is from the History of Easton, Mass., by W. L. Chafin. 1886.]

Brig-General Benjamin Tupper was a citizen of Easton for about ten years—for several years a schoolmaster here, and by marriage closely connected with several Easton families. He was born in Stoughton, in that part now Sharon, March 11, 1738. His father was Thomas Tupper, Jr., of Sandwich. His mother was Remember (Perry) Tupper, also of Sandwich, and sister of Capt. Nathaniel Perry of Easton. They had moved to Stoughton before the birth of their son. For her second husband she married, October 4, 1742, Jeremiah Willis, the ancestor of the Philip Willis families. Benjamin lived with his parents until he went to learn the tanner's trade with Mr. Withington, of Dorchester. This was in his boyhood, for he was apprenticed very early. While at Dorchester he was much on the water, shooting being his favorite pastime; and he there gained that familiarity with the islands of Boston harbor which was of such advantage in his revolutionary service in that locality, which will presently be noticed. In the French and Indian war we find him, when but sixteen years old, in the company of his uncle, Capt. Nathaniel Perry. This was in 1754. After this, for about ten years, Easton

was his home. He was employed upon the farm of Joshua Howard, though he owned and may have cultivated a few acres of land which he bought in 1756. He served, however, in several campaigns in the war just named, being a corporal in 1757, and a sergeant in 1759. In Easton he was for a number of years a schoolmaster, serving in this capacity during the winter. He taught as early as 1761.

November 18, 1762, Mr. Tupper married Huddah, daughter of Edward and Kezia White, of Bridgewater. She was born in 1739. Her mother Kezia was a native of Easton, being the daughter of George and Katharine (Dean) Hall, who were early settlers. Mrs. White had married in 1748, for a second husband, Edward Hayward, Esq., already so well known in this history. The latter died May 21, 1760. She lived four years of widowhood, and then in 1764 married Deacon Robert Randall. January 8, 1764, Benjamin Tupper joined the Congregational Church of Easton. A few months after this he moved to Chesterfield, where he was an active citizen, and became the first deacon of the church. On the breaking out of the Revolutionary War he was a lieutenant of militia. He proceeded at once to Springfield, and dispersed the

Supreme Court of the Crown then in session there. He then marched to Roxbury, and was at once made a major in Colonel Fellows's regiment. About the middle of July, 1775, he made an expedition with muffled oars to Castle Island, burned the light house, and brought off considerable property, though the British fleet was not far off. The British endeavored to rebuild the lighthouse, but while the work of restoration was in progress, Major Tupper embarked some men in whale-boats, taking some field pieces with them. They arrived at the lighthouse about two o'clock in the morning and attacked the guard, killing the officers and four privates, and captured the rest of the troops. Having demolished the works they were about to depart, but the tide left them, and the Major himself was attacked by the enemy's boats. But sinking one of the boats with his field-piece, he escaped with the loss of one man killed and one wounded. He killed and captured fifty-three of the enemy; and among the captured were ten Tories, who were immediately sent to Springfield jail. This brave and successful attack won great praise. Washington thanked Major Tupper next day in general orders. Jefferson saw in it "the adventurous genius and intrepidity of the New Englanders;" and the British Admiral said that "no one act of the siege caused so much chagrin in London as the destruction of the lighthouse, and it was the theme of the most biting sarcasm."

He was sent to Martha's Vineyard to capture two vessels in August, 1775. In the following September he embarked with his men on whale-boats from Dorchester, landed on Governor's Island, and brought off eleven head of cattle and two fine horses. While the enemy held Boston, Major Tupper was intrusted with the command of several expeditions that can not be detailed here, but which showed the great confidence that General Washington had in his good judgment and courage. The fol-

lowing incident illustrates his intrepidity and presence of mind:—

"Three men were out in a boat, fishing in Boston Harbor. The wind shifted, and the broken ice completely blocked up their way, so that it was impossible for them to return. Their situation was one of great peril. The wind blew severely cold, and the men must soon have perished had not Colonel Tupper appeared, who, taking in the situation at a glance, procured four pairs of snow-shoes, and putting one pair upon his own feet and taking the others under his arm, he made his way to the boat over the floating ice. The shoes were fastened to the feet of the men, and Col. Tupper brought them all away safely to the shore amidst the shouts and congratulations of the people."

Benjamin Tupper was lieutenant-colonel in Colonel Bailey's regiment, from January 1, 1777, to July 1, at which time he became Colonel of the Eleventh Regiment of Continental troops, which command he held to the end of the war. From September 1, 1778, and for more than a year afterward, he was inspector in General Patterson's brigade.

1 State Archives, Continental officers vol. for 1777 to 1779, page 138.

During the memorable winter of 1777-1778, his regiment was with Washington at Valley Forge; and on January 28th, 1778, he addressed a pathetic appeal to the President of the Council of Massachusetts, imploring help for the distressed soldiers. He served with honor throughout the war, and towards its close was appointed brigadier-general by brevet. He took charge of the military organizations at Springfield at the time of Shays's Rebellion, and repelled the attack made by the insurgents on the Armory. He and General Putnam were chiefly instrumental in organizing the Ohio Company.²—

(2) The evidence for the truth of this statement seems to the writer to be conclusive, notwithstanding that Hon. Geo. B. Loring gives the chief credit of the affair to Dr. Manassah Cutler, of Essex county, Mass. Rufus Putnam and Benjamin Tupper joined in the call for the meeting held in Boston which led to the

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formation of this company, — a meeting which Dr. Cutler says he had not thought of attending until urged to do so by Winthrop Sargent, a friend of General Tupper. For proof of these statements see Nos. 10 and 11 of the articles of Solomon Talbot already alluded to — a company formed to buy and encourage the settlement of the fertile lands of the Ohio Valley. General Tupper was one of the most active in surveying and laying out the lands and inviting their occupation by settlers. We cannot follow in detail all his interesting western experience in the Ohio territory. He was appointed Judge of the Court of Common Pleas in 1788; was a Freemason of high rank, and a member of the Society of the Cincinnati.

Perhaps the most noteworthy thing in the life of General Tupper is the fact, based on what seems sufficient evidence, that *he was the real inventor of the screw-propellor*. The authority for this is the diary of Rev. Dr. Manassah Cutler, a clergyman of note, and afterwards a member of Congress. He was with General Tupper in 1788, while on his journey to Ohio. The following extract from his diary is quoted by Solomon Talbot in his account of General Tupper:—

"Friday, August 15, 1788 — This morning we went pretty early to the boat. General Tupper had mentioned to me a mode of constructing a machine to work in the head or stern of a boat instead of oars. It appeared to me highly probable that it might succeed. I therefore proposed that we should make the experiment. Assisted by a number of people, we went to work and constructed a machine in the form of a screw with short blades, and placed it in the stern of the boat, and which we turned with a crank. It succeeded to admiration, and I think it a very successful discovery."

It would thus appear that General Tupper, ninety-eight years ago, anticipated the discovery of the screw-propellor, which was nearly half a century in coming into favor, but which every ocean steamship now employs.

Troubled times with the Indians soon

followed, and a war of several years duration was brought to an end by General Wayne, who subdued the savages in 1795. But General Tupper passed away earlier, dying June 7, 1792, at fifty-four years of age, and was buried at Marietta. When General Lafayette visited Marietta in 1825, and the names of the pioneers (many of them Revolutionary soldiers) were read to him, he responded, "I know them all. I saw them at Brandywine, at Yorktown, at Monmouth, and at Rhode Island. *They were the bravest of the brave*."

The following notes are from the sketch of Gen. Benjamin Tupper's life in Hildreth's *Memoirs of the Early Pioneer Settlers of Ohio*. (1852.)

After the close of the war Gen. Tupper returned to his family at Chesterfield, and soon after was elected by his town as their representative in the Legislature of Massachusetts.

During the darkest hours of the Revolution war Gen. Washington had turned the attention of officers and soldiers to the valley of the Ohio, as a place of refuge to which they might retire, should the British army be successful against them. The result of that war rendered such a retreat unnecessary; notwithstanding, many of the officers and soldiers of the army looked to the west as a retiring place for themselves and their families, after a war of eight years. Among the most prominent of these was Gen. Tupper. Indeed, in the foresight of Gen. Rufus Putnam and himself the enterprise of the settlement at Marietta had its origin.

The ordinance of 1785 provided for a survey of a portion of the lands northwest of the river Ohio. In the autumn of that year the first regiment of United States troops, or one battalion of them, had taken post at the mouth of the Muskingum, under the command of Maj. Doughty, and erected a fort, which received the name of Fort Harmar. In that year Gen. Rufus Putnam had been appointed to command the survey of a portion of the lands in Ohio, but being

otherwise engaged, Gen. Tupper was appointed in his place. In the summer of that year he came as far west as Pittsburg. The condition of the Indian tribes prevented the execution of that work until the treaty made by Gen. Parsons, and others, on the Miami, in January 1786. Gen. Tupper returned to Massachusetts in the winter of 1785-6, but left again for the west in June, 1786, with his eldest son, Maj. Anselm Tupper. That season the survey of the 7th range was completed under his direction. During that period he visited Maj. Doughty, at Fort Hammar.

On Gen. Tupper's return from his first visit to the west, he visited his friend, Gen. Rufus Putnam, then residing at Rutland. In the language of another, "A night of friendly offices and conference gave at the dawn a development to the cherished hope and purpose of Gen. Tupper. They united in a publication which appeared in the public papers of New England on the 25th of January, 1786, headed 'Information,' dated January 10th, 1786 signed Rufus Putnam, Benjamin Tupper."

As the result of this conference and address, the Ohio Company was formed. Dr. Manasseh Cutler, in connection with Winthrop Sargent was appointed to negotiate a contract with Congress for land. At the third meeting of the company at Boston, August 29th 1787, Dr. Cutler reported that the contract had been completed.

Within a day or two after the defeat of Shays at Springfield, January 1787, Gen. Tupper went to Northampton, where he was visited by many of his old friends. Known also as having visited the Ohio country, many persons called upon him to inquire about the lands, rivers &c. of the valley of the Ohio. In the spring he went to Worcester to see Gen. Putnam, and concert measures to set forward the proposed emigration to Ohio. Many formidable difficulties which attended the organization of the company were overcome, and Gen. Tupper began his own arrangements for moving to the

Ohio in the summer of 1787. At that period wagon-makers were not common, even in New England. One, however, was obtained, and two wagons were built, one for the family, the other for their baggage.

After his arrival at Marietta Gen. Tupper was actively engaged in promoting the plans and interests of the Ohio company, being intimately associated with Gen. Putnam in the management of its affairs.

On the 9th of September, 1788, the first civil court held in the Northwestern Territory was held at Col. Battelle's, in *Campus Martius*. This was the Court of Quarter Sessions. *Rufus Putnam* and *Benjamin Tupper* were justices of the quorum, assisted by justices of the bar.

Judge Putnam gave the charge to the grand jury. After one or two sessions Judge Tupper presided, until his death in June, 1792.

At an early period in his life Gen. Tupper made a public profession of the Christian religion, by uniting with the Congregational church at Easton. After his arrival at Marietta he did not forget his obligation. His efforts were directed to preserve to his family and associates the benefits of public and social worship of God. Before the arrival of the Rev. Daniel Story, the first minister, meetings for social worship were held on the Sabbath. The usual place of worship was the same room in which the first court was held, near the northwest corner of the stockade. These meetings were generally conducted by General Tupper.

[Additional facts obtained from original sources, in regard to the first families who arrived at Marietta, Aug. 19th, 1783, conducted by Gen. Tupper.

The pioneers who arrived at the Muskingum April 7, 1788, led by General Rufus Putnam were men only. Their object was to lay out the town and to prepare homes for the families who were to follow. The first of these were conducted to their new home in the Ohio territory by General Tupper.

In the Summer of 1788, the little company started from the East. Together Gen. Benj. Tupper, Col. Nathaniel Cushing, and Major Nathan Goodale; old army comrades made the long journey over the mountains to the Ohio. With them were their wives, and children. Gen. Tupper's family consisted of himself, his wife, two sons, his daughter, Miss Rowena Tupper, and his brother Judah. His eldest son, Maj. Anselm Tupper, had arrived on the 7th, of April previous. As a part of this family circle, was Ichabod Nye, a soldier of the revolution; a young man still, with his wife, Minerva, daughter of Gen. Tupper, and their two little children, Horace, two years old, and Panther, six months old. Gen. Tupper had also in his employ two hired men, Col. Cushing, with wife and six children, Maj. Goodale and wife, and seven children, two of them young ladies. Arriving at the Ohio they waited at Wellsville for Gen. Putnam to send up the Ohio Company boat, from Marietta, for them, and for Major Asa Coburn and family, and his son-in-law, Andrew Webster and family, who had been detained on the route over the mountains. A most welcome addition also to the company here was Dr. Manassah Cutler, on his way to Marietta, to attend a meeting of the Directors of the Ohio Company. At Wellsville, Ichabod Nye taking the hired men, and the worn out horses, left the company, and came down to the Muskingum by land, on the Virginia shore. They arrived here August 9th. The others descended the river in the boat, arriving at the Muskingum, Aug. 19, 1788.

Of this trip Dr. Cutler has made mention in his diary. Ichabod Nye met his wife and children at the landing at the Point and took them to the home he had provided for them on Washington street, that night. The other ladies and children remained upon the boat. The next morning the boat was towed around into the Muskingum and landed at the foot of Washington street, where the ladies and children were received with the

greatest enthusiasm and most gallantly escorted to Campus Martius, their new home. Then began the family life of the first settlement of Ohio, August 29, 1788. Other families followed, General Rufus Putnam, however, did not bring his family to Marietta until 1790.

August 19, 1788.

Dr. Cutler writes in his diary: "We landed at the point and were very politely received by the Honorable Judges General Putnam and our friends. General Putnam invited me to his lodging, which is a miracle."

August 20, 1788.

"This day an entertainment was given to the Governor and officers of the garrison at the hall in Campus Martius. * * We had a handsome dinner, with punch and wine. The Governor and the ladies from Fort Harmar were very sociable. Miss Rowena Tupper and the two Misses Goodale dined and fifty-five gentlemen."

Upon completing his business here Dr. Cutler returned to his home in the East in September.

The children of Benjamin Tupper and Huldah White Tupper were

Anselm, born at Easton, Mass., Oct. 14th, 1763.

Minerva, born at Chestertfield, Mass., 1764.

Sophia, Rowena, twins, born at Chestertfield, Mass., 1766.

Edward White, born at Chestertfield, Mass., 1771.

Benjamin, born at Chestertfield, Mass., 1775.

All these children came to Ohio with their father except Sophia, who married Gen'l Nathaniel Willys of Massachusetts. She died in October 1789, leaving no children.

Major Anselm Tupper died unmarried December 25th, 1808, and is buried at Marietta at the side of his father.

Minerva Tupper married in Chestertfield, Mass., Ichabod Nye, of Tolland, Conn. She died in Marietta, April 20th, 1836. Her descendants many of them

reside in Marietta.

Rowena Tupper married in Marietta, February 6th, 1789, Winthrop Sargent, Secretary of the Territory, died in 1790, leaving no children.

Gen'l Edward W. Tupper married in Marietta, May 3, 1804, Mrs. Berthia Putnam, daughter of Dr. Gleason, and widow of Dr. W. P. Putnam, of Marietta. He died in Gallipolis, Ohio, September 7, 1824, leaving no children. She survived him many years.

Col. Benjamin Tupper, Jr., married at Marietta, Martha, daughter of General Rufus Putnam. He died at Putnam, February 1th, 1814. She died at Putnam, August 24, 1842. Their children settled at Putnam, O.

Mrs. Huldah White Tupper, wife of General Benjamin Tupper, survived him many years. She died at Putnam, O., February 21, 1812.

The name of Tupper is extinct among the descendants of Gen'l Tupper.

Sergeant Theodore Tupper, the last to bear the name, died on the battle field of Shiloh, April 6th, 1862, at the age of nineteen. "He fell at the front, when

just in the act of firing, and literally gave his last moment to his country." He was the great-grand-son of both General Rufus Putnam and General Benjamin Tupper.

General Tupper's death in 1792 at the age of fifty-four, occurred at Marietta during the Indian War. The burial ground at that time was distant from Campus Martius, and a funeral there liable to an attack from Indians. He was therefore buried under the protection of a field piece in the north-east block-house of the garrison. The burial was on Warren street, near the public square Quadranaon. Years afterwards his remains were removed to Mound cemetery, where a plain slab bears this inscription:

GEN'L BENJAMIN TUPPER,
BORN AT
SHARON, MASS., IN 1738.
DIED
JUNE 7TH, 1792.
AGED 54 YEARS.

[A more complete account of General Tupper and his associates at Marietta, will be published during the coming year.]

ANSELM TUPPER.

[The following is from Chaffin's History of Easton, Mass.]

Major Anselm Tupper, eldest son of General Benjamin and Huldah (White) Tupper, was born in Easton, October 11, 1763. When the Revolutionary war began he was 11 years of age. His father, of course, left him at home when he departed for the scene of action; but he inherited the military spirit from both the Perrys and the Tuppers, and the brave lad could not remain at home. Accordingly, soon after the battle of Lexington, he enlisted in Capt. Robert West's Chesterfield company, 1 (1 State Archives, Revolutionary Rolls, vol. vi, p. 43) which was assigned to Colonel Fellows's regiment, in which his father was already major. It was interesting to think of this Revolutionary soldier, *not yet twelve years old*, engaging in all the toil, hardship, and peril of war, and never flinching until his country's independence was achieved.

Anselm Tupper remained in the service in the same regiment with his father, participating with him in the engagement on the North river in Aug. 1776, being in his regiment also at West Point. He was an ensign in 1779. March 15, 1780, he began to serve as lieutenant, though not at that time commissioned as such. September 15, 1780, Colonel Tupper recommended Anselm Tupper and others in his regiment for promotion. The document embodying this recommendation is very interesting, because it is indorsed by General Washington, who, under his own signature,

earnestly approved and urged the promotions suggested by Colonel Tupper.² (21*bid*, Revolutionary Letters, vol. cciii, pp. 109, 110.)

The appointment was made September 26, 1780. He then began to be paid as lieutenant.³ (31*bid*, Continental officers, vol. for 1780, p. 87.) From January 1, 1782, until January 1, 1783, he was lieutenant and Adjutant in Colonel Tupper's regiment in the Continental army (the eleventh).⁴ (41*bid*, Revolutionary Rolls, vol. ix, p. 13.) His appointment as adjutant began presumably on the former of these two dates, although it is possible he may have been serving in that capacity a short time in 1781. After this time and until the close of the war he served as adjutant in the Continental service in Col. Ebenezer Sproat's regiment (the second, once Col. Bailey's). His name appears as of that rank in a list of officers of that regiment under date of July 11, 1783.⁵ (51*bid*, vol. I, p. 13.)

After the close of the war⁶ (6This remaining account of Major Anselm Tupper was mainly written by Anselm Tupper Nye, the nephew of Major Tupper, for Solomon Talbot, who has kindly furnished it to the writer of this history.) he was engaged as surveyor with his father, who had been appointed by the Government to lay out the lands in the territory northwest of the Ohio. After completing the survey of the seven ranges Major Tupper returned to Massachusetts, and in November, 1787, was appointed by the directors of the Ohio

Company as surveyor for that company for the State of Massachusetts. He was one of the famous pioneer band that crossed the Allegheny Mountains in the winter, and made the first settlement in the Northwest Territory at Marietta, April 7, 1788. The survey was continued until they were driven off by the attacks of the Indians, who afterwards, in 1790, surprised a settlement up the Muskingum River and barbarously butchered one woman, two children and eleven men. Major Tupper at the head of a company of soldiers went to this sickening scene of atrocity, and buried the bodies side by side where they fell.

Anselm Tupper was the first school-teacher at Marietta. When we consider that such regular schooling as he possessed must all have been acquired previous to his entering the army (which he did before he was twelve years old), it may seem strange that he was fitted to fill the position of teacher. But he had no doubt improved the opportunities af-

forded by association with French officers of education and culture, probably learning the French and Latin languages, as he is understood to have been a classical scholar. He had great proficiency in mathematics, and was also something of a poet.

Major Tupper is said to have possessed a polished address and fine intellectual ability, and was a great favorite in society. He never married. He was appointed major of the stockade at Marietta during the war, and afterwards taught school in one of the blockhouses. In a vessel built at Marietta he made a voyage as second officer down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, across the Atlantic, up the Mediterranean and Black seas to Trieste. He returned home, and died several years afterward. He was buried in the Mound Cemetery at Marietta, near his father, and his epitaph reads,—

MAJOR ANSELM TUPPER,
BORN AT EASTON, MASS., OCT. 11, 1763,
DIED DECEMBER 25TH, 1808.

From Mrs. G. T. McIntosh
Oct. 2, 1906.

